The McREL Technology Intervention (MTI) program is a template that school administrators could use to create school wide technology integration reform. It will benefit any technology director, technology action integration committee, principal, superintendent, and school board contemplating stepping technology integration up a notch or two from teachers using technology for mostly bookkeeping and upgraded overhead projectors to the level of fluency that will create adult who are well equipped with the skills they will need to participate in a global economy and workforce. It includes the processes and tools for analyzing current technology use levels, and tools to determine technology use goals for teachers themselves and/or administrators. In order to accomplish technology skills upgrades, the Pitler text stressed,

*Training must have an instructional focus that guides teachers to think first about their curriculum and second about how to integrate the technology into that curriculum. …technology needs to be considered as a means and as an instructional tool, not as a goal in itself.”* (A-4).

In other words, the focus of professional development should be on student curriculum. The technology tools are taught once teachers understand it is necessary for them to use a particular technology tool in order to properly present student curriculum. The Pitler document also provides sample surveys, rubrics, and an implementation timeline. It would have been very nice to have had this document for assigned reading in week 1 in order to give us a framework from which to construct our Technology Intervention Projects.

According to, a quote by (Johnson,Johnson, & Stanne, 2000) in 2007 McREL publication, *Using Technology with Classroom Instruction that Works*,

*when students work in cooperative groups, they make sense of, or construct meaning for, new knowledge by interacting with others…To be prepared for the fast-paced, virtual workplace that they will inherit, today’s students need to be able to learn and produce cooperatively.*(p.139)

The problem that faces almost all schools is related to implementing a professional development plan that will actually work. The 90’s and early 2000’s are littered with failed attempts to provide technology training for tools that looked great, but required teachers to re-invent their curriculum. Textbook publishers have worked hard over the last five years to develop traditional text books with tons of sample lessons, tons of technology integration suggestions, embedded online learning tools, etc. But still, it appears that teachers use their computers and document cameras for little more than fancy typewriters, electronic gradebooks, and fancy overhead projectors. I am relieved to learn that this problem is prevalent, but alarmed that it is prevalent. Because it is prevalent, dedicated education researchers and pedagogical exports have investigated a number of solutions. Solom and Schrum, authors of the 2007 book, Web 2.0: New Tools, New Schools, posit that the solution “ might be to incorporate communities of practice into educators’ daily routine and lives.”

Basically, it’s an application of the old cliché’ “What’s good for the goose is good for the gander!” In other words, it stands to reason that if students collaboratively and actively learn better in collaborative groups focused by specific curriculum goals, their teachers will also learn better in an atmosphere that emphasizes the “social and cultural context of learning…which further defines learning as a process of participation in communities of practice…situated in a specific context…through activities, contexts, and cultures.” Through creative implementation of communities of practice teachers will set common goals, and establish timelines that work well with their classroom curriculum plans enabling them to provide improved curriculum and add technology check points to improve their technology use ratings for their annual evaluations and on mandatory statewide Technology assessments such as the Texas Star Chart.

In using the CAST site Book builder and UDL design tutorial last week, we were introduced to activity and lesson design that can be easily customized to a every unique student in a class. Essentially the tools on this site make it feasible for a teacher not only to design activities, lessons, intermediate, and annual goals, for each student, but also to customize and/or embed every evaluation and assessment with the accommodations each student needs to perform their best on every throughout the learning/assessment process. According to Rose and Meyer (2002),

*In a digital environment,*[*embedded assessment*](javascript:popup(%22../../sitewide/glossary.cfm?g_id=25%22,%22Glossary%22,550,350))*can offer additional flexibility to further accommodate students'*[*affect*](javascript:popup(%22../../sitewide/glossary.cfm?g_id=116%22,%22glossary%22,550,350))*. First, most students find the options available within a multimedia environment�images, sounds, animations, and simulation�fun and appealing. Second, teachers' ability to level and scaffold* [*embedded assessments*](javascript:popup(%22../../sitewide/glossary.cfm?g_id=25%22,%22Glossary%22,550,350))*can ensure that every student is working at a comfortable and appropriate stage of difficulty.(C.7)*

This is the best argument I have heard for eportfolio embedded assessments which evaluate the whole body of a student’s work during the sixweeks or year rather than relying on a single performance on a single medium instrument that may inhibit student performance due to inherent incompatability with stuent disabilities and/or learning styles. The trick is going to be moving away from the current statewide assessment format. I have heard that a number of Texas schools, refused to participate in TEA mandated testing this year. It will be interesting to watch what happens are a result.

Resources:

Pitler, H. (2005). McREL technology initiative: The development of a technology intervention program final report (Contract Number ED-01-CO-)))6). Aurora CO:Mid-Continental Research for Education and Leaning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Swervice No. ED486685) Retrieved from: http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?\_nfpb=true&\_&ERICExtSearch\_SearchValue\_0=ED486685&ERICExtSearch\_SearchType\_0=no&accno=ED486685

Hubble,E., Kuhn,M., Malenoski,K., Pitler, Howard, (2007). *Using Technology with Classroom Instruction that Works*, Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, by ASCD, p. 139.

Solomon, G. & Schrum, L. (2007) Web 2.0: New tools, New schools. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technologyh in Education, 99-116.

Rose, D. & Meyer, A (2002) Teaching every student in the digital age: Universal Design for learning. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Chapter 7. Retrieved Oct. 5, 2009 from: http://www.cast.org/teachingeverystudent/ideas/tes